

# 1<sup>st</sup> Newsletter of Diversity Inside Out



## About the project

The Diversity Inside Out project aims to address labour market needs by firstly, increasing awareness of the necessity of a diverse workforce and providing an opportunity to nurture innovation and creativity where all culturally diverse views are respected. The project builds upon the business case to understand processes and systems which ensure individuals, managers and employees meet their full potential by promoting a climate for a diverse workforce.

The group had a very successful meeting in May 2022 where the group planned the work ahead and reviewed the main challenges.



Dinner in Iceland after a productive day of work.

## Good participation in the desk research

The first part of the project was the research phase, during which a questionnaire about people's opinion towards diversity and inclusion in the workplace was sent to managers. When managers were asked "What are the biggest diversity challenges their organisations face?" most answered:

- Recruiting individuals from excluded groups
- Challenging existing power structures in the organisation
- Encouraging staff to be active bystanders to intervene in cases of racism, sexism, disability discrimination and anti LGBTQi+ behaviours

The feedback from the managers participating was used to inform the development of the project's training material.

# Diversity Cards

## Diversity Card 10



### NARI

HR Team Leader

AGE 32

GENDER Female

NATIONALITY Dutch Citizen of Korean heritage

**FAMILY SITUATION** Married to her Dutch partner who live together in Amsterdam. Had their first child together during COVID pandemic. She refused the vaccination as she was unsure of the impact and unfortunately caught COVID. Before birth, she was taken into intensive care with breathing difficulties and has now recovered to a certain extent. The baby was born early but doing well. She's been diagnosed with long-covid.

**JOB/CAREER** International HR Team Leader working for a multinational.

**PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON GENDER EQUALITY** Fairly good knowledge of HR and employment law, including gender equality. Nari is becoming more interested in mental and physical health issues in relation to women in particular.

#### ATTITUDES AND EMOTIONS

- Nari, a high achiever and perfectionist, is struggling to make sense of the situation she finds herself in, she has had a real crisis in confidence in both her identity as mother and as a professional. She feels her dreams of career progression and having another child are on hold. She has been informed she may recover, but at the moment it's a slow process. She feels her husband doesn't quite understand how tired she gets and he still has high expectations of her which she can't meet. She used to cook fresh meals now they live on ready meals.

#### MOTIVATIONS

- Nari was very career focused and still is, but she has had to rethink her priorities. They still have bills to pay and the mortgage on their townhouse. A friend in HR in another organisation suggested she might be deemed as suffering a disability and be able to claim benefits support. Nari is reluctant to do this as she feels it's giving up on her career goals.

#### WORK SITUATION

- Nari is now trying a phased return working mornings only, working from home. She has not enjoyed this and feels out of sync with colleagues. She's only been out a while, but processes have changed and some personnel. The move to working online was stressful, she's missed online meetings and has forgotten how to use all the different software on her laptop. Colleagues have been very kind, but it's a pressurised environment and no-one would offer to help her with her workload. She should be managing others but has no energy for it. She's just in survival mode and is burning out.
- A few people are talking about her behind her back and blaming her for not having had the vaccination. There's some ill feeling that she is on light duties while others are covering her workload for no more pay.

#### CURRENT CHALLENGES

Nari went back to work post maternity leave and in her first week she was suffering with fatigue and aches to such a great extent that she was signed off sick. Lung function tests confirmed damage to her lungs and she struggles to breathe, which impacts her ability to do tasks. She used to cycle into work. She is still on sick leave but has requested the flexibility to work from home. At the moment she doesn't know if and when she will return. She tires easily and has support to take care of the baby. The child, now a toddler, is exhausting and Nari can't keep up.

In the first activity the partners have prepared a set of Diversity Cards. The cards will offer stories, scenarios, and sets of questions that will be used to prompt lively discussion and debate. They will provoke honest conversations about the dilemmas relating to diversity and inclusion in the workplace (racism, age discrimination, sexism, gender discrimination, menopause discrimination, presenteeism, intersectional issues, LGBTQi+A, carers, parenting issues).

This practical tool can be used for education and discussion about diversity in the workplace. It can also address issues and dilemmas that may have occurred and caused a misunderstanding. Furthermore, the Diversity Cards will raise awareness about the importance of talking about diversity and how it positively impacts organisations and team members as well.

The cards will be available for anybody to use on [www.jafnretti.is](http://www.jafnretti.is)

## Piloting with Managers

According to feedback received from the pilot participants, the Diversity Cards were a great tool for facilitating discussions and debate around issues of inclusion, diversity, and discrimination. Participants praised the Diversity Cards' potential to contribute to a dialogue of diversity in various types of workplaces, providing a safe place for discussion on perspectives.

